

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-07 TRSE-00 DHA-02 /067 W
-----180708Z 085912 /21

R 171533Z MAR 77
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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
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E.O.11652: N"A
TAGS: PFOR, GE, WB,CSCE
SUBJECT: ABRASIMOV FOLLOWS UP PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SHORT
HORIZONT INTERVIEW

REF: BERLIN 5506

1. IN A FOLLOW UP TO HIS MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE
IN EAST BERLIN, SOVIET AMBASSADOR ANSWERED TWO
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN
GDR WEEKLY HORIZONT MARCH 16. ABRASIMOV ATTACKED
WESTERN JOURNALISTS WHO COVERED HIS PRESS CONFERENCE
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FOR NOT REPORTING HIS REMARKS ON SOVIET SUCCESSES IN
MEDICINE AND EDUCATION. FOR ABRASIMOV, THIS SHOWED
THAT THE WEST REFERRED TO HELSINKI ONLY IN REGARD TO
THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF "HUMAN RIGHTS", WHILE
IGNORING THE FULFILLMENT OF TRUE HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER
SOCIALISM.

2. ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF REACTION IN THE FRG AND WEST BERLIN TO HIS STATEMENTS ON THE QA, ABRASIMOV ACCUSED CERTAIN WESTERN POLITICIANS AND NEWSPAPERS OF TURNING HIS REMARKS AROUND. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR IRRITATION WITH GOVERNING MAYOR SCHUTZ FOR ATTEMPTING TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH ISSUES BEYOND HIS COMPETENCE WHEN HE SPOKE OF A "FOUR POWER STATUS" FOR "GREATER BERLIN." ABRASIMOV REEEMPHASIZED THAT THERE IS A "SOCIALIST BERLIN - THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR" - AND WEST BERLIN, WHOSE VIABILITY "DEPENDS IN MANY RESPECTS ON THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE QA."

3. COMMENT: IN HIS CONFERENCE, ABRASIMOV HAD IN EFFECT CHALLENGED WESTERN REPORTERS TO GIVE EQUAL COVERAGE TO HIS REMARKS ON SOVIET SUCCESSES IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. IT IS THUS PPROBABLE THAT THE FOLLOW-UP HORIZONT INTERVIEW WAS PLANNED IN ADVANCE TO GIVE ABRASIMOV A CHANCE TO GET HIS "I TOLD YOU SO" ON RECORD AND PROVED A CONVENIENT OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK SHUTZ AS WELL. WE HAD HEARD FROM THE BRITISH EMBASSY ON MARCH 13 THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD ABRASIMOV INTENDED TO CLARIFY SOME OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS INCLUDING THOSE ON ALLIED MILITARY RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN. ABRASIMOV DID NOT USE THE HORIZONT INTERVIEW TO SAY ANYTHING FURTHER ON THE MILITARY RIGHTS QUESTION, HOWEVER, AND WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS THAT HE INTENDS TO DO SO ELSEWHERE. POLANSKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOCIALISM, HUMAN RIGHTS, DETENTE, PRESS CONFERENCES, STATUS OF BERLIN, BERLIN QUADRIpartite MATTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BERLIN05544
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770093-0061
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770351/aaaabrzm.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2ab309b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BERLIN 5506
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3084000
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ABRASIMOV FOLLOWS UP PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SHORT HORIZONT INTERVIEW
TAGS: PFOR, GC, WB, UR, CSCE, (ABRASIMOV, PYOTR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2ab309b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009